

## The Clipper Visits... Robert Cipriani

By SUSANNA SHEEHAN

For Robert Cipriani, who recently retired after a 40-year career as a graphic designer, making the move to a new life as a painter came almost as a surprise.

It happened while he was vacationing last summer in Wellfleet on Cape Cod.

"On a whim, I took some acrylics with me to paint one small abstract, and since then I've painted continuously," says the soft-spoken 64-year old.

This self-described "Type A personality" who has won over 800 national and international advertising and design awards



Painting is Cipriani's newest passion

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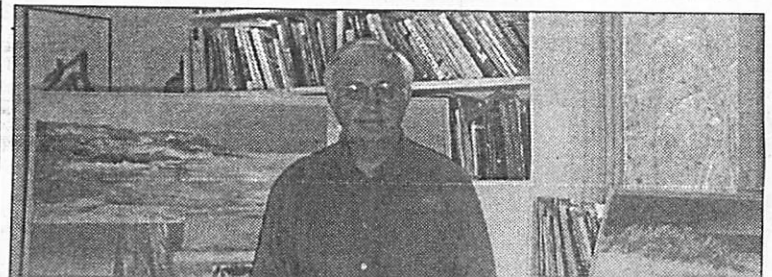
and who was voted New England Art Director of the Year wondered what direction his professional life would take after he gave up designing full-time.

It turns out that painting is the answer to that question.

I," received third place in Duxbury Art Association's Winter Juried Show at the Art Complex Museum. Also a giclee print of his painting of the Bluefish River was accepted as part of the Duxbury Bay Maritime School's silent auction

in his life and this is one for me," he explains.

After college and a stint in the army, Cipriani's graphics career began after he entered his college thesis project on the Boston Arts Festival in the Art Director's Club of Boston show and won "best of show"



Cipriani, a Mansfield, Mass. native and a 1960 graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, has no training as a fine arts painter other than what he learned in college.

Yet his paintings have been so well received that only eight months after he started, his canvases are currently hanging in three galleries: Artica at Hall's Corner in Duxbury; the J. Todd Gallery in Wellesley and the Left Bank Gallery in Wellfleet.

This winter, the Bay Rd. resident's painting, "Totem

landraser this past Memorial Day weekend.

Cipriani is also anticipating the opening of his first show at the Left Bank Gallery on July 19. It is called "Transitions."

The title comes from Cipriani's philosophy that he has not really retired from his design career, just transitioned into another artistic arena. While he still actively designs and consults, he spends most of his time now exploring his life as a painter.

"I guess everyone goes through a few career changes

beach grass that stretch to the sea and sky beyond. He also paints marshes, mountains and bogs. Sometimes these images appear as a single painting that fills its own canvas; other times they are montages, separate miniature paintings of varied scenes inhabiting the same canvas in visual harmony.

Cipriani has painted scenes of Bay Road's water views, the Bluefish River, and Duxbury Beach. He has also painted the colorful vineyards and the rolling mountains of the Napa Valley, California countryside.

The same vacation that started Cipriani down a new career path is also responsible for helping him find his favorite medium as a painter - acrylics.

"I never felt swept away as a painter until the summer

for it.

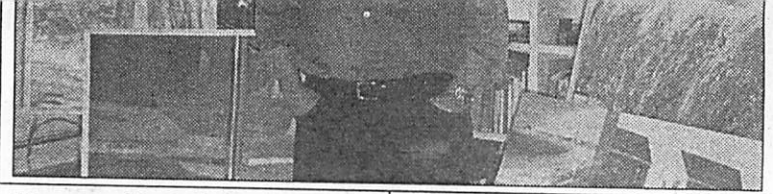
As a graphic designer, Cipriani created corporate identities for companies such as Brown Brothers Harriman, Cole Hahn, Bass, Fidelity Investments, Four Seasons Hotels and Zildjian Cymbals to name a few. Creating an identity for a company begins with designing a logo and then carrying through the same logo, colors and type-style into all the business's brochures, annual reports, packaging, web design, and pretty much everything else. "It's a complete creative solu-

tion to all their needs," he says. vacation in Wellfleet," he explains. Acrylic paint "is a medium with which I really feel at home. I like acrylics because they dry very quickly and I can paint transparent layers over other transparent layers so it almost becomes like liquid stained glass."

Cipriani works on large canvases, 3x2 feet or 4x3 feet, and uses a palette knife to scrape and scribe the paint on to the surface. Often he incorporates modeling and sculpting gels, which give his paintings a rich texture and a dimensionality.

Cipriani prefers palette knives to brushes for many reasons: "To me, the palette knife gives the paintings a freshness and immediacy that I find more difficult to achieve with a brush."

The palette knife allows Cipriani to paint long streaks



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Cipriani has created corporate identities for more than 100 companies and for public organizations as well as charities. He has been recognized many times for his achievements, winning numerous prestigious awards from organizations including the American Institute of Graphic

Arts, the New York Art Directors Club, the New York Type Directors Club, the Hatch Awards, the Andy Awards, Graphis Annual and Communication Arts. of color and use multiple paints along with the sculpting gels. "This process becomes very interactive. When I do that I can go back with knives and combs and create textures. It's very much like plastering a wall in parts of the painting. The whole process is so intense and enjoyable."

Cipriani uses his knowledge of computers and various programs used in graphic design when beginning a painting. He captures his scenes with a digital camera and then uses the computer to manipulate the image into something he wants to paint. The scene is altered even more as he creates the painting. The photographs become just a loose reference.

The artistic talent Cipriani brings to his painting is clearly apparent, but the drive that

Arts, the New York Art Directors Club, the New York Type Directors Club, the Hatch Awards, the Andy Awards, Graphis Annual and Communication Arts.

Although he began as a designer, Cipriani has worn many hats in his career. He has also been an art director, creative director, and agency owner. He formed his own

has brought him so quickly from creating a painting on a whim while vacationing last summer, to the opening of his own art show at a respected gallery this summer, is what makes Cipriani's new career as an artist unique. Seeing where this career leads is the exciting part for him.

"I just want to see how far I can push it," he says. "When I was young, I always wanted to be a great designer, and now I want to see how far I can go as a painter. That means not only getting recognition but seeing how my style will develop over the years. What is exciting for me is seeing how I will evolve as a painter."

Whatever direction his style takes, it is safe to say that Robert Cipriani is well on his way toward another rewarding artistic career.